

REMARKS

Applicant's Statement of Substance of Interview

Applicants wish to express appreciation to Examiners Wenpeng Chen and Manav Seth for the courtesy of a personal interview which was granted to Applicants' representative Sanford T. Colb (Reg. No. 26,856) at the USPTO on December 15, 2005. The Examiner's statement of the substance of the interview is set forth in the Interview Summary, numbered Paper No. 12152005. During the interview, Claim 1 was discussed vis-à-vis the Valesio reference (FR 2 687 091). In the interview, Applicants' representative proposed amending the claims to recite "a defect identifier operative to receive said representation of boundaries of elements and to compare at least coordinates of some locations of at least some boundaries in said representation of boundaries of elements with reference to a corresponding region of acceptable location coordinates to identify defects in said electrical circuit" which is not shown or suggested by the cited prior art.

The Interview Summary states, "the proposed amendment by applicant would withdraw the rejection with respect to reference (Valesio et al), particularly on the subject matter "comparing angles" but the proposed amendment ... would require further consideration and search."

General Remarks

Claims 1-15, 18, 20-24 and 27 are pending in the application. Claims 1, 12, 14-15, 20-21 and 23-24 are currently amended and Claims 16-17, 19 and 25-26 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 14-15, 20 and 23-24 include amendments to adopt terminology introduced in their respective parent claims.

Applicant has carefully studied the outstanding Office Action in the present application. The present amendment is intended to be fully responsive to all points of rejection raised by the Examiner in the Office Action mailed September 27, 2005, and is believed to place the application in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and allowance of all claims under consideration is respectfully requested.

Prior Art Rejections

Claims 1 – 8, 12 – 17 and 21 – 26 stand rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Valesio et al. (FR 2 687 091) in view of Aloni et al. (US 5,619,429). Claims 9, 10, 11, 18, 20 and 27 stand rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Valesio et al. (FR 2 687 091) in view of Aloni et al. (US 5,619,429), and further in view of Bachelder (US 5,974,169).

Valesio (FR 2,687,091) describes a process for computer assisted inspection of cutouts made in a tape by a cutout machine. The inspection method includes extracting contours (boundaries) defining the cutouts and making a polygonal approximation of the cutout. Segments of the polygonal approximation are vectorized, and the series of angles between successive segments are compared with corresponding angles in a theoretical cutout to detect defective cutouts. Aloni describes apparatus and a method for inspection of a patterned object (an electrical circuit) by comparison of the object to a reference. The apparatus and method include hardware defect detection and software postprocessing. Bachelder describes machine vision methods for determining characteristics of an object using boundary points and bounding regions.

Independent Claim 1 has been amended and now includes, *inter alia*, the following distinguishing recitation:

a defect identifier operative to receive said representation of boundaries of elements and to compare at least coordinates of some locations of at least some boundaries in said representation of boundaries of elements with reference to a corresponding region of acceptable location coordinates to identify defects in said electrical circuit.

Independent Claim 12 has been amended and now includes, *inter alia*, the following distinguishing recitation:

comparing at least coordinates of some locations of at least one of said boundaries in said representation of boundaries of elements with reference to a corresponding region of acceptable location coordinates to identify defects in said electrical circuit.

Independent Claim 21 has been amended and now includes, *inter alia*, the following distinguishing recitation:

comparing coordinates of some locations of at least one of said boundaries in said representation of boundaries of elements with reference to a corresponding region of acceptable location coordinates to identify defects in said electrical circuit portion.

As pointed out by the Applicants' representative with reference to Claim 1 in the interview held on December 15, 2005, nothing in any of the prior art of record shows or describes, alone or in combination, comparing at least coordinates of some locations of at least some boundaries in an electrical circuit with reference to a corresponding region of acceptable location coordinates to identify defects. The combined teachings of these three documents, even if taken together for what they would have meant as a whole to an artisan of ordinary skill, fail to meet the above-identified requirements of the claims as now amended. In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the rejection of independent Claims

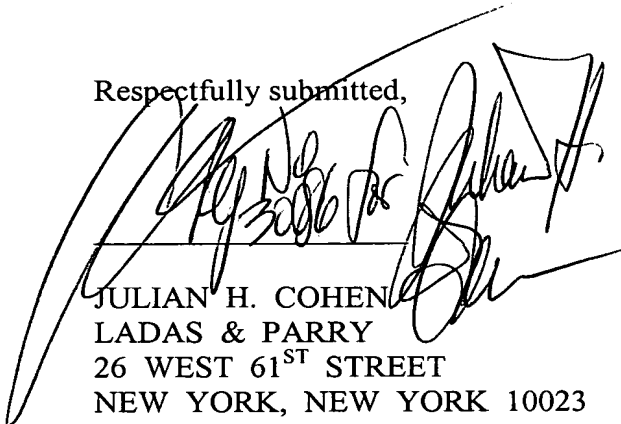
1, 12 and 21 and all of their dependent Claims 2-11, 13-15, 18, 20, 22-24 and 27, under 35 USC §103(a).

Conclusion and Request for Interview

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 12-0425. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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